



FACT SHEET

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History of Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas

! Major General Rush B. Lincoln, commander, Air Corps Technical Training Command, Chanute Field, Ill., arrived in Wichita Falls, Texas, November 29, 1940 to survey four sites on which to build a proposed technical school. Though secret negotiations had been underway for some months, the first acknowledgment that the city of Wichita Falls was under consideration for a training base occurred in July 1940 when Major Oscar Beal and Captain Joe A. Miller, both stationed at Chanute, landed at Kell Field to survey the area for a possible military training site.

! With substantial concessions from millionaire oilman J. S. Bridwell, who owned more than half of the land under consideration, the Army concluded an agreement with the city of Wichita Falls to build a training school on 600-plus acres of land surrounding the municipal airport, Kell Field. On February 1, 1941, the Army leased the land for \$1 per year and immediately began to let contracts worth more than \$6 million for construction of an aircraft mechanic school and its support facilities.

! The new field was soon named for Texas Senator Morris Sheppard, chairman of the Senate Military Affairs Committee, who died unexpectedly in April, 1941. Senator Sheppard had worked to improve America's defense capability in response to the war in Europe he felt would inevitably involve the United States. Construction of buildings began in May 1941. Most of the dormitories were ready by August. Aircraft mechanic training began on October 13 and Sheppard was officially dedicated the following weekend on October 17. The first class of 210 mechanics graduated in February 1942 during the crucial opening months of American involvement in World War II.

! During World War II, Sheppard conducted basic training, glider mechanics, instructor, B-29 engineer and C-82 transport training in addition to the aviation mechanics school. It also provided advanced pilot training, liaison aircraft training for ground officers, and helicopter pilot training.

! The field reached its peak strength of 46,340 people while serving as a separation center from September through November 1945.

! Sheppard Field was inactivated August 31, 1946, and declared surplus to the War Department's needs; it was transferred to the jurisdiction of the Corps of Engineers April 30, 1947.

! On August 1, 1948, control and accountability for Sheppard Field was transferred to the Department of the Air Force. It was reactivated August 15, 1948, to supplement Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, as a basic training center and was renamed Sheppard Air Force Base.

! Basic training was discontinued in June 1949, but was resumed from July 1950 to May 1952. The aircraft mechanics school was transferred to Sheppard from Keesler Air Force Base, Miss., in April 1949 to make room for expansion of electronic training at that base. The school was renamed the Department of Aircraft Maintenance Training within the 3750th Technical School.

! Comptroller, transportation, and intelligence training moved to Sheppard from Lowry Air Force Base, Colo., in the fall of 1954. Communications, refrigeration, air conditioning and power production operator and repairman training were transferred here from Francis E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyo., in 1958. Intelligence training returned to Lowry in February 1962. Missile training began at Sheppard in 1957 and was discontinued in September 1985.

! On January 1, 1959, the 3750th Technical Training Wing was designated the Sheppard Technical Training Center. The USAF School of Applied Science was redesignated the 3700th Technical Training Wing in 1977.

! Field training became an important part of Sheppard's mission in 1959 when the management of 53 field training detachments was assigned to Sheppard. Additional detachments were transferred here in 1966 and on July 1, 1971, Sheppard assumed responsibility for all field training detachments under supervision of the Department of Field Training. The group was designated the 3785th Field Training Wing in July 1984.

! A Strategic Air Command operational wing of B-52 and KC-135 aircraft was located at Sheppard from January 1, 1959 to April 2, 1966. In July 1969 Det. 1, 2d Bombardment Wing, with four B-52 aircraft, became a tenant organization and remained here until in 1975. These aircraft rotated as part of SAC's dispersal concept.

! The U.S. Air Force Medical Service School began its move to Sheppard from Gunter Air Force Base, Ala., in March 1966. On June 10, 1971, the name changed to the School of Health Care Sciences and on April 15, 1988, it was designated the 3790th Medical Service Training Wing.

! Its five departments (dentistry, nursing, support services, medicine and veterinary medicine) provide training for most Air Force medical service personnel. This training included an orientation course for newly commissioned medical service officers until December 1991 when that course moved to Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

! The wing also provided physician assistant training from July 1971 until the program was discontinued in June 1985. It resumed here in 1989, but discontinued again in 1996.

! Helicopter pilot training was transferred from Stead Air Force Base, Nev., in October 1965. It included fire-fighting training in addition to undergraduate helicopter pilot training. H-19, H-43, CH-3C and TH-1 helicopters were used for training.

! Helicopter training was discontinued June 30, 1971, when the U.S. Army assumed responsibility for training Air Force helicopter pilots.

! The 3630th Flying Training Wing was activated December 10, 1965, and assumed the helicopter training program. It began providing undergraduate pilot training in the T-37 and T-38 for the German air force in August 1966.

! The 3630th Flying Training Wing provided undergraduate pilot training for the Vietnamese air force from July 1971 to April 1975.

! The wing designation was changed to the 80th Flying Training Wing in January 1973.

! The 80th Flying Training Wing began conducting the Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training Program on October 1, 1981. This unique, one-of-a-kind program provides fighter-oriented pilot training for 13 NATO countries. Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States were the original members of the program. Spain was accepted into ENJJPT in September 1995.

! On February 1, 1992, many of the units at Sheppard underwent a restructuring designed to streamline management. Sheppard Technical Training Center became the Sheppard Training Center to reflect the diversified training conducted at the base.

! In addition, the 3700th Technical Training Wing was designated as the 396th Technical Training Group; the 3790th Medical Service Training Wing became the 396th Medical Training Group; and the 3785th Field Training Wing became the 396th Field Training Wing Group.

! Many other subordinate units at Sheppard were realigned or absorbed to streamline management and push leadership to the lowest levels possible. This was part of an overall Air Force effort to reduce the number of management levels.

! Another name change took place on July 1, 1993, when Air Training Command became the Air Education and Training Command, taking the Air University under its umbrella of responsibility. Sheppard Training Center was redesignated the 82d Training Wing. Along with this renumbering, the medical training and field training groups also took on the 82d designation, along with the support group and all support squadrons.

! As ATC became AETC, two numbered air forces also were created. The 2d Air Force, headquartered at Keesler AFB, Miss., is responsible for all of AETC's technical and field training activities, while the 19th Air Force, headquartered at Randolph AFB, Texas, oversees all pilot-training programs. As a result, the 80th Flying Training Wing, a tenant unit at Sheppard Air Force Base, became equal in status with the 82d Training Wing. A second technical training group was added in 1994 to accommodate the increased number and diversity of courses taught here, and was designated the 782d Training Group. The other training groups also were renumbered: the 396th Technical Training Group became the 82d Training Group, the 82d Medical Training Group became the 882d Training Group, and the 82d Field Training Group became the 982d Training Group.

! The 82d Training Wing is one of four training wings in the Air Education and Training Command, and is the most diversified. Its three training organizations conduct both resident and field training that qualify students in a broad range of career fields.

(Current as of March 2001)